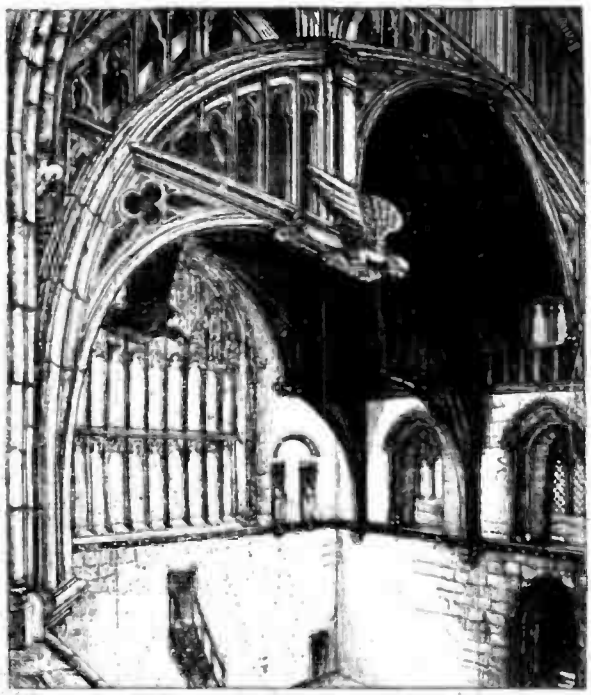

Westminster Hall Roof.

Gothic Architecture.

CHAPTER I.

We now beg to draw attention to what we consider will be found the most important feature in this number, inasmuch as it is the commencement of the task with which we have charged ourselves to enter upon the investigation and elucidation of the character and principles of Gothic Architecture.

We use this unhappy term, Gothic, for no other reason than that as we address ourselves mainly to the workmen, and as the style of architecture so designated originally in opprobrium has now and for long obtained the appellation in a popular sense, we feel unwilling to depart from it until a thoroughly correct epithet shall have been devised and accepted amongst us; that we are justified in this decision, or rather indecision, we think may be shewn by the various opinions of parties who may be said to rank as the authorities on such points. Mr. Pugin is anxious that it should be called "Pointed, or Christian Architecture." Mr. Whewell and others have lately been pleading for a title which the prevalence of vertical lines and principles of construction, as in contradistinction to the horizontal character of Greek architecture, appear to them to justify; others again have contended for the term "English Architecture." Now, without committing ourselves to an opinion of our own, we think there is sufficient ground for hesitating as to the adoption of this or that novelty, notwithstanding our strong objection to the inapt and absurd term "Gothic."

Our task will be formidable, as to the length of time it will occupy, the pains-taking it will require, the expense it will entail upon us, and, above all, the system with which it must be conducted. But what good thing is to be accomplished without some one or more of all these? We only hope to be cheered on by the approving smiles and the patient co-operation of those for whom we undertake it.

And how do we commence this task, so as to give promise that a system may be observed, without which the best efforts in other respects are likely to fail? It will not do to enter upon it at random, or without due preparation, both on our own part and that of our readers. We shall, therefore, proceed to state our object in selecting the illustration we have done as the heading of this paper.

Let the carpenters look to it, and let them look on it with pride—nay, let them look on it as we have done, with reverence. Let them remember that this was the work of great spirits of their department. It is a masterpiece, and we have chosen it on this account, as we shall continue, for some weeks to come, to make choice of similar master-pieces, in the masons' department. Oh! we have such glorious examples at our hands. And then, again, as to ornamental brickwork, and brass and latten work, and that gorgeous coloured glazing, and such mastery in the carvers' and sculptor's art; these we choose, to fire the breasts of our readers. We would excite them by such glowing description of the land of promise into which we propose to lead them, that the future steps, however irksome or laborious, may be trodden with a light and gladsome foot. For the present, then, and as we have said, for weeks to come, we shall select the instances of varied excellence in roofs, vaults, arching, in traceried windows, doorways, screens, in elaborate specimens of "bench carpentry," such as stalls, pulpits, railings, tabernacle and screen work, in monumental brasses and other memorials of sepulture, in moulded and enriched brickwork; the encaustic and coloured pavements, the staining in glass, and generally all such matter in the province of the artificer as may be regarded with the admiring eye of the discerning practitioner.

Borrowing a similitude from what we are otherwise bound to deprecate, we would speak of these as the trophies of our predecessors in campaigns of glory, bidding every good soldier in this day of later, though of similar service, to burn with ardour until he may have successfully emulated the doings of his ancestry.

Yes, every carpenter should feel proud of a calling which enrols him in the ranks of a craft whose arms are emblazoned and charged with insignia such as these: but we promise the same evidences of distinction to every department of the building fraternity.

This Westminster-Hall roof, spanning over an area of 74 feet wide and 270 feet in length, rearing its ridge to the height of 90 feet, exhibits in its application a proof of the progress of working upon a principle which is, in the present day, somewhat too much decried. Originally that Hall was otherwise covered in; doubtless, in the same manner as the halls at Norwich and York; that is, with a roof supported by pillars; but the decay, or perhaps destruction by fire, of the original roof, gave scope to the genius of advanced science, which, disdaining to merely restore, applied this noble emendation,—with such happy effect, however, as not only to reconcile us to a departure from the original models, but to lead us to applaud the "*innovator*."

The illustration we have given has been made pictorial rather than simply geometrical; because, as we have already observed, our object now is not to enter into a critical examination, which would with such a subject be beginning at the wrong end, but to give a comprehensive glimpse of that end to which we must by another process patiently steer. This plan will enable us, too, to give much more effect to our future instruction, inasmuch as it will enable a greater number of readers to become our companions in the paths of study and research. After we have occupied what appears on all hands to be a sufficient number of our series in illustrations of this class, we shall commence with the simple rudiments of Gothic art, citing first from the most ancient specimens the various features of the edifices of the period, and accompanying it by a glossary of terms and such matter of description as will give the series the character of a workman's hand-book or manual.

Take, for instance, the subject of Roofs as now brought before us. We have in this draught or picture, a kind of summing up of that which it will be our duty to go through in detail, as to style, construction, and workmanship. In Masonry, though the end may be one of those embodied marvels of the imagination, the almost over-wrought canopy of a stone ceiling or roof; and which end, as in the case of this week's carpentry, we may present to view; yet the beginning of our studies will be some rude effort of a Saxon chisel, and their continuation, to trace through the various eras the change and progress, until we arrive, skilled as masters, to analyze and fully understand the intricacies of science and art involved in these objects of our setting out.

By this we hope to give a thoroughly practical character and value to our pages, and that, this will be in nowise diminished, if we shew ourselves now and then susceptible of emotions of almost ecstatic delight, while we contemplate those almost superhuman efforts of the skill of the mid-æval architects and workmen.

In concluding the present chapter, we beg to state that we have copied the drawing at its head from the beautiful work known as Britton and Brayley's Westminster.

Reviews.

First Additional Supplement to the Encyclopædia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture. By J. C. Loudon, F.L.S., &c. London: Longman and Co.

It was said by the *Times*, of the Encyclopædia to which this is a supplement, that "no single work had ever effected so much in improving the arrangement and the external appearance of country dwellings, generally," and nothing that was ever said by that influential journal had in it greater truth. We scruple not to go out of our way to subscribe in full to this opinion. And we say more, that no man living has ever laboured more assiduously, generously, and usefully, to effect every practical improvement in the building art, than our good and worthy friend Mr. Loudon.

And why should we scruple or be ashamed to confess the strength of our partialities for one of whom we entertain such an opinion? It may be said,—but no! we will not do any man the injustice to suppose that he will say any thing in disparagement of our motives, and certainly none will be so ungrateful as to undervalue the honest disinterestedness of our friend. See him, read his works, and if any one after that retires with a feeling of less reverential respect than our own, we will give him license to bate us for a partiality of an over-measured and unfair amount.

What if he has put at our service in the Precursor Number and in this review the choice of those pleasing illustrations that adorn his works? We point to these as additional proofs of his title to the respect and esteem of our readers. He was influenced, we know full

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